



By Dr. David Chang  
Vice-president

## VERBAL POLLUTION

I have been serving in BSOP for almost a year. Many people ask if I feel comfortable here. I would say I have gotten used to most of the things here, such as eating three meals a day in the canteen as well as the hot weather.

The only things I am still struggling with are the chaotic traffic and heavy pollution (garbage littered on the streets, thick black smoke exhausted by jeepneys, buses, and trucks). Many students have to take jeepneys to serve in the churches during weekends. I would say to them: you've had a long day! Environmental pollution pesters everyone, but everyone is polluting the environment. Just imagine what a beautiful world we would have if there were no pollution.

Aside from air and environmental pollution, there is another kind of poisonous and harmful pollution called verbal pollution. We may ask: who is causing verbal pollution? The answer is: the murmuring, complaining, criticizing ones as well as those pessimistic people. Such people tend to create a negative environment, a passive atmosphere. One seminary that was inflicted by verbal pollution vowed to speak nothing negative but edifying, encouraging, praising or grateful words for a whole week. After one week, guess what happened? Everyone realized that there is nothing to say, each one had to learn to speak all over again!

In Ephesians 4, Paul teaches that everyone who is redeemed in Christ, whose sin has been forgiven and has become God's child, should put off his old person and lifestyle, and put on the new person. One aspect of the old life to put away is verbal pollution. In 4:25-32, Paul teaches us what kind of verbal pollution should be removed from

our life and our words.

### Lies (v. 25)

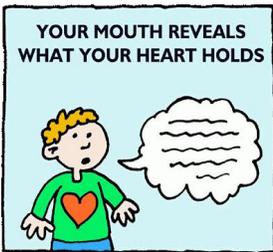
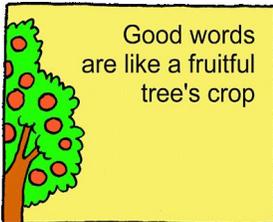
To speak falsehood is to lie, to deceive others. If you tell others that it is 8 o'clock, and later found out that your watch had stopped, this is not a lie. But if you tell our classmates that the Greek exam is at 3 p.m., yet you yourself take the exam at 2 p.m., knowing this is the schedule, you are lying to your classmates. Lies are from Satan. In the Garden of Eden, Satan deceived Eve, saying: "did God really say, 'you must not eat from any tree of the garden'?" So Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan and sinned. We need to watch out, not to lie unbendingly and be deceived by Satan. A lying person will lose others' trust.

There is another kind of lie called "white lie" or "small lie". Someone calls you up; you don't want to answer the phone, so you tell someone else to inform the person that you are not around. This can be considered a small lie. Or when someone asks you "how are you?" and you answer: "I am fine", and yet your long face betrays you. If you insist that you are fine, people will assume that you don't want others' concern, and you would become estranged from them. In verse 25, Paul tells us to put off falsehood and to speak truthfully, because we are God's children and members of one body. We should love one another and edify one another in love and thus put off falsehood.

### Anger (vv. 26-27)

Anger is caused by unhappy events, and as a result we lose control of our temper. Anger inside our hearts is harmful to our health.

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If we pour out our anger toward someone else, we hurt others, and oftentimes the ones we hurt are the ones who care about us. Anger ruins our relationship with others.

We can't justify our anger by citing that God often bursts out in anger in the Old Testament and Jesus also gets angry in the New Testament. We can hardly be angry and not sin, because our emotional outburst is often tainted by sinfulness. Unlike our omniscient God, we often get angry before we have a clear view of the whole picture. Aristotle once said: "everyone can get angry, but to get angry toward the right object, in the right degree, in the right time, with right purpose, in appropriate manner is not easily attained."

Therefore, we better not get angry. In case we do lose emotional control, burst out in anger, and sin against others, we must not "let the sun go down" while we are still angry and give the Devil a foothold. If we sin against others, we should be willing to be humble and have the courage to resolve the conflict or misunderstanding as soon as possible. If someone sins against us, we should be merciful to forgive. Satan often uses our lies and anger to ruin our relationships with our brothers and sisters. We should not give him a foothold by quickly resolving our problems with others.

### **Unwholesome Words (v. 29)**

Our mouths and hearts are connected, that's why Mat. 12:34 says: "from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." When we become God's children, we put off the old person and put on the new. God expects that our hearts, words and behavior should be changed. From inside out, we should be renewed and transformed: from having a hardened heart to a loving heart, from being estranged from God to looking up to God, obeying Him, being humble as Jesus Christ, living for Jesus, doing His will.

From the Book of Romans, we can see how the Lord Jesus changes a person's words and behavior. Rom. 3:14 states that the sinners' mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Then in Rom.10:9-10, it says when sinners believe Jesus is God's Son, his mouth will confess that Jesus is the Savior, his Lord. Paul also says in Rom 15:6 that a believer loves to praise and glorify God with his heart and mouth.

We should not use the same mouth to praise and adore God and to hurt others with filthy words. Another translation of "unwholesome words" is gossip. Gossiping may not seem as intimidating as lies and anger, but scornful, taunting, and contemptuous words are as harmful as direct anger. We should not speak any unwholesome word, but only edifying words anywhere and anytime. To do so, we need to change our selfish hearts into tender and loving hearts. Our words can ruin relationships and hurt people, but they can also edify people – it all depends on how we speak.

### **Bitterness (v. 31)**

Paul admonished: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." It's all about sinful attitudes and having enmity in our hearts toward others. Maybe we had conflict with others that haven't been resolved properly and we see the other party as our enemy. When we have bitterness in our heart, a small conflict, maybe resulting from misunderstanding, would trigger our fury, then we may hurt others with ungodly and malicious words. Initial quarrels can often lead to physical fighting. We can hardly believe that such things can happen in fellowships and churches but as a matter of fact, they do happen. We should watch out and stay sober. God wants us to be like what Psalm 133:1 describes, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity."

Bitterness and anger often sprout from quarreling over insignificant issues, and result in ruining a family, a church or brothers' and sisters' relationships. Paul reminds us in verse 30 that we should avoid bitterness because it grieves the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts. When parents see children quarreling and fighting at home, wouldn't they be grieved? How much more the Holy Spirit?

Lastly, Paul says that the reason we harbor bitterness in our hearts is because we can't forgive others who hurt us either intentionally or unintentionally. This gives Satan a foothold to ruin our loving relationship with others. Bitterness hardens our hearts and our attitude toward others would become acrid and harsh, which is exactly what Satan loves to see. When we hurt others with harsh words, we are the ones who get hurt the most, even physically, for many cells in our body die. We have been forgiven by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, shouldn't we forgive our brothers and sisters? We forgive not for the sake of ourselves but for the sake of Jesus Christ and others. To learn to forgive and forget is the secret of a Christian's joy.

Why do we need to get rid of verbal pollution? The main reason is that we are members of one body in the Lord Jesus Christ. We should care for one another, edify one another, and give no foothold to Satan to ruin our relationships or grieve the Holy Spirit. We should remove from our midst falsehood, anger, unwholesome words and bitterness. We have been redeemed from sin in Christ Jesus and become new creations. Let us love one another and thus testify that we are truly the Lord's disciples.

*Note: This is a chapel message given by the author; it was translated into English by Ptr. Paul Liu and edited by Dr. Jean Uayan.*



## NEW FACULTY



Rev. Dr. Wilson Tran and his wife Dr. Un Ho Irene are the newest faculty members of BSOP. Wilson, who originates from Vietnam, is serving on a voluntary basis. Irene is a Filipino-Chinese. Both of them received their Doctor of Ministry degrees from Denver Seminary in Colorado. Before coming to BSOP, Wilson was the senior pastor of Winnipeg Chinese Alliance Church in Canada, while Irene served as part-time pastor of Winnipeg Chinese Lutheran Church. Now they are teaching courses in the Chinese Department. Another addition to the Chinese Department is Dr. Chen Kaiying who received her Doctor of Ministry degree from Singapore Bible College. Her status as part-time faculty has changed to full-time.

## VISITING FACULTY

- Dr. Glen Scorgie of Bethel Seminary taught a course in the English Department (Spiritual Formation: Prayer and the Christian Life) on June 20-24.
- Dr. Albert Wu, General Secretary of Frontiers (HK), is devoting one year to teach in the Chinese Department. He arrived on September 20 and is now teaching two courses:

Team Working and Peacemaking. He has a Ph.D. in Electronics and Computer Science and a Diploma in Christian Studies from China Graduate School of Theology. He is also a board member of the Hong Kong Association of Christian Mission. In Hong Kong, he is a guest lecturer in major seminaries like Alliance Bible Seminary and the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary.

- Dr. William Kirwan and his wife have returned to teach two courses: Becoming a Counselor and Marital Counseling.

## FACULTY NEWS

- Dr. Joseph Shao led 30 faculty members and students as delegates to the 8th Chinese Congress on World Evangelization held in Bali, Indonesia from September 12 to 16, 2011. Dr. and Mrs. Shao were also participants at the Jambi for CCCOWE Evening and Sunday Worship held on September 17 to 18, respectively. Dr. Rosa Shao conducted a counseling seminar on "Dissolving Family Conflict through Communication."
- On October 9 to 21, 2011, Dr. Rosa Shao will be attending a training workshop on "Members' Care" in Chiang Mai, Thailand, conducted by the Narramore Christian Foundation.

- Dr. Jane Chuaunsu trained Sunday School teachers at Bethany Church on August 30 and September 4, 2011. She also spoke in the Youth Fellowship on September 1, 2011.
- On September 27-30, Dr. David Chang, Dr. Chiu Eng Tan, Dr. Jane Chuaunsu and Rev. Philip Co represented BSOP in attending the Institute for Excellence in Christian Leadership Development conducted by the Overseas Council International. The venue was the Sulu Riviera Hotel in Quezon City.

## ALUMNI GATHERING

On September 10 the Alumni Association held an Autumn Festival fellowship, meeting at UECP's Youth Hub from 8 to 11 a.m. After sharing a traditional Chinese meal, alumnus Rev. Tony Ong shared his experiences of founding and leading the Balik-Dangal Ministries, which focuses on the spiritual transformation of prisoners at the New Bilibid Prison and the Antipolo City Jail (see photo below). The meeting ended with a dice game where everyone won prizes.



## RETREAT AT BSOP/QCSC

The second quarter began with a retreat held at BSOP on the evening of September 18, 2011 (Sunday). The program included worship, family fun-time, prayer and personal meditation. The next day, Dr. William Kirwan shared a message, followed by another hour of personal meditation. After lunch the students and teachers went to the Quezon City Sports Club for recreation.



I come from a Christian family. My maternal grandmother was elder Phoebe Co Guat Hua 許月華長老, a leader of the UECP Evangelistic Band that actively planted churches in different areas of the Philippines in the 60s and 70s. Recently, I learned that her father was the well-known Pastor Kho Seng Iam who established churches around the Quanzhou area in Southern Fujian, China, during the early decades of the 20th century. Both my parents were elders and my auntie Gregoria G. Beltran was a Principal of Hope Christian High School for more than 25 years. With such a family legacy, people would naturally expect me to be as passionate for Christ and living a higher standard of Christian life.

The opposite happened during my student days. I liked going to school but I hated studying. I was obsessed with basketball, billiards and hanging out with my *barkada* so that my class cards seemed like Christmas cards with all the red marks. In college, I cut classes and indulged in some vices. I went through college without really learning much from any of my subjects.

When my home church (Jubilee Evangelical Church) moved from Matienza St. to New Manila, I started to get involved in its activities. I served as a song leader, emcee, coordinator and officer; this helped me build up my skills, competence and confidence in myself. Outwardly, I seemed to be one of the ideal young Christian leaders - talented, dedicated, and always seemingly available for the Lord and passionate in service. However, I separated my church life from my everyday life. My officemates were surprised to know that I was an active Christian, yet, in my life, I was really worldly in some aspects; my language, lifestyle and attitude oftentimes reflected un-Christian characteristics. I really didn't care as long as I was happy. I was happy at church serving and using my talents, but at the same time, I was happy enjoying the things that this world could offer.

Often time, God would remind me during conferences to live a life worthy of His calling and I would be revived; then after a few weeks, I would go back to my old life. I'm so grateful that our loving Heavenly Father remained faithful and patient. Indeed, He is a God of second and more chances. A few years back, I was elected as an elder of JEC, and that year proved to be my final turning point. No training and advice was given to me during that time so my first few months proved to be uneasy. I read books and what I've read confirmed my greatest fear, that an elder has the same responsibilities as a pastor, that he should be shepherding the

flock and exemplifying high standards in his spiritual life. I also got involved with the Filipino-Chinese Christian Foundation a few years back and in my travel and dialogue with other church leaders, I found out that the elders of other churches were called to preach to their congregations and outside as well. Also, in my visits to other Filipino-Chinese churches I learned that the need to raise up the next generation of pastors and missionaries should be the priority of every church or else a crisis will befall us a few years from now.

My reason for studying in BSOP is not that I clearly received God's calling to full time ministry, but because of my role as an elder - I need to be equipped and trained specifically in a seminary in order to help shepherd our congregation properly. I struggled with many apprehensions: my age; my mind is not as sharp as before; my responsibilities as a family man and in the church; and my businesses in Manila and in the province. In the past, I was able to graduate because the professors had compassion on me. But if I fail now in BSOP, it would embarrass my church, my family and its legacy, my friends and most of all, my God. But by God's special grace, He has given me the courage to attempt great and new things for Him, to have faith when all logic and reasons point the other way. My spiritual brothers and sisters are also encouraging and supporting me in my endeavors. I was able to get one of the highest grades in my class! God has blessed me with good and honest people to oversee the day-to-day business activities and it is doing quite well in spite of the economic crisis. And most peculiar of all, I find myself looking forward to attend classes, do homework, and actually study for my exams! My wife commented that when I was young, I didn't like to study. Now that I'm older, I keep on wanting to study! God has changed me inside out and indeed, I can say that whoever is in Christ is a new creation. I'm now learning more and more things about my Creator who loves me and gave His life for me and I consider serving Him a privilege, not a burden. My challenge to everyone reading this testimony: do not fear to attempt great and new things for God. He will never leave you and in return, He will give more and more grace and resources, and the fulfillment and rewards will be so much greater. Do everything with Excellence, Passion and Integrity. **TO GOD BE ALL GLORY AND HONOR!**

A Testimony by Christopher Beltran



## CONVOCATION 2011

New students were welcomed on August 14, 2011 at the BSOP Auditorium. Rev. Anthony Hao gave the special message while two students gave their testimonies. The Seminary's new publication *Expanding Horizons: Theological Reflections* was launched during the occasion.



Editors Drs. Jean Uayan, Rosa and Joseph Shao launching *Expanding Horizons*



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